2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Film-Going Habits

In the eyes of many Badagas one of the greatest benefits of the bus system is that it permits frequent trips to cinemas in the towns. Most families now see films often, and what they see has a great impact on them. Some of the most popular films are dramatizations of Indian history or of epic stories which reinforce traditional ideas about Hinduism and the nature of the universe. But equally popular are the films about modern life, about social problems like divorce, widow remarriage, 'love' marriages and intercasts marriage; dramas which are presented against a background of affluence that is unfamiliar yet fascinating to the villager. These modern themes extol city life, non-traditional marriage practices and luxury goods such as cameras, watches, radios, mechanical toys and sports cars. The impact of these films is already clear: younger Badagas yearn for watches, motorcycles, and all the other paraphernalia they have come to associate with modern urban life.

Radio

Among the most commonly desired gadgets are transistor radios, which are appreciated partly as a source of light music and partly as a prestige symbol. Only the wealthier Badagas own radios, but every village has at least one set, either owned privately or provided by the government; many teashops also have radios. All-India Radio presents much government propaganda, especially talks directed towards improvement of farming and village co-operatives. These broadcasts—in the Tamil language—are not very much listened to, because the vast majority of village radios are constantly tuned to light music coming from the commercial Radio Ceylon. In a sample of 420 Badaga men and women in 1963, 17% said they never listened, 16% only heard music, 38% heard news as well as music, 14% listened specifically for news broadcasts and only 2% mentioned informative talks as being of interest to them.[14] The higher the incidence of *regular* listening, the higher the popularity of news broadcasts, two variables correlated no doubt with the length of time a village has been electrified.

Newspapers

My survey on the use of the media in 1963 showed that radio is

21 Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

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9. See above, pp. 166, 168. On the designation of Badagas as a caste, see Hockings, 1968 b, *passim*.

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10. Ward, 1821, lxv; see above, p. 142. Until 1878 the mails were carried by teams of runners; Grigg, 1880, 408.

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11. The district is unusually well endowed in this respect, for it is only the size of Warwickshire or Luxemburg and slightly smaller than Rhode Island State. From Ootacamund some of the major cities of South India are also served: Madurai, Salem, Mysore, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Palghat and Calicut (Kozhikode).

212

12. India, 1962, 133; Moses, 1964, 33, found 73% of Badaga males and 50% of females literate ($N = 200$). My sample in 1963 was 420.

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13. There are a few who combine the business trip with a pilgrimage, but this is not usual.

14. This purposive sample was drawn from 656 interviews in the district.

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15. $Chi^2 = 5.18$, $P < 0.03$. This middle-aged group had grown up during the slump which spanned the 1930s and which is reflected in the low food-grain prices of those years; see Madras, 1965, 37.

125

16. *manetana*, literally 'house-stage' or 'house-level'; compare Kannada *manetana*, translated as 'household,' 'race, family' by Kittel, 1894, 1207, the connotation being a family of worthy people.

128

17. Grigg, 1880, 366. These were village magistrates and clerks; see above, p. 172.

554

18. These social distinctions have over a century of history. They are crystallized in various proverbs as well as being universally recognized normative concepts. One proverb, for example, runs: 'Though it is hot water it will extinguish fire.' This refers to group loyalties: though we may have a friendship with a man of another lineage, village, faction, phratry or community, we will take the side of our own group against his when the need arises. Other proverbs relate to particular social distinctions, e.g., between one village and another:

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'Even if he is headman of his own village, he is not superior to the son of the widow of the last house in another village.'

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'If you are not cunning, do not go to Jakkatala; if you are poor, do not go to Ke:ti.'

E.g., between phratries.

'If a crow makes a dropping on you it is a bad sign; if a Ha:ruva shouts at you it is a bad sign.'

E.g., between affines and agnates:

'If brothers curse each other, one can still build his house on his brother's threshold; if in-laws curse, leave and run away.'

'Though she is our sister, is her husband ours?' (In a later work I plan to analyse some 1300 Badaga proverbs).

[p. 238 is blank]

517 Preferred movie theme:

No films seen	17.6%
All kinds	19.6%
Modern social themes	19.3%
Historical or religious themes	22.3%
Adventures and thrillers	2.0%
(Not ascertained)	19.3%

[125] The sample was drawn, on a random basis, from all Badaga hamlets in the stippled areas shown in the map on p. 30.

Transistor radios are highly valued but difficult to obtain in India. They • 207 are valued partly as a prestige symbol and partly as a constant source of light [554] music. Only the wealthy Badagas own radio sets, but nearly every hamlet has at least one set, either privately owned or provided for public use by the government. Many tea-shops also have radios. It is therefore easy enough for people to hear the radio, even if they cannot own one. Radios in India carry much government propaganda, especially information directed toward the improvement of farming practices and village cooperatives. These broadcasts are not often heard in the Nilgiris, however, because the vast majority of sets are constantly tuned to light music coming from the commercial Radio Ceylon. In a sample of 420 Badaga men 207 and women, 16.9% said they never listen to radio, 15.5% only heard music, 38.3% 517 heard news as well as music, and 14.5% listened specifically to news broadcasts; [125] only 1.6% of the sample mentioned informative talks as being of interest to them.

[125] (This sample, like all others in this study, was drawn only from the stippled areas shown on the map, p. 30. These areas were selected so as to represent the full range of economic activities, distances from towns, and relations with the settlements of other communities, throughout the Nilgiri Plateau.)